

## **Introduction**

In February 2018 the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) released the third ARACY Report Card updating previous editions released in 2013 and 2008.

It uses the latest available data, from a range of sources across a range of indicators. Where possible the Report Card includes comparisons using similar indicators for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as well as international comparisons.

The Report Card is based on [The Nest](#), an evidence-based policy framework outlining priorities for investment in six areas which must be properly met for a young person to have wellbeing:

- Loved and Safe
- Material Basics
- Healthy
- Learning
- Participating
- Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

This is a summary of selected findings contained in the report card.

The report, and a technical report containing links to all references can be found on the [ARACY website](#).

## **About ARACY**

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) is a research and results focused, apolitical organisation. We work with government, researchers and those providing services to children and their families.

Our aim is to help children achieve a better life. We focus on heading off problems before they arise.

ARACY is unique in making the link between all areas of wellbeing for young Australians. We also make the link between all areas of government, policy making, research and service delivery to address the issues young Australians face.

## Report Card 2018 - summary of selected findings

### Loved and safe

Measure and report page number	Findings
Family conflict (p. 10)	In 2017, 20 per cent of those aged 15-19 were extremely or very worried about family conflict. This was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at 26.4 per cent.
	In 2016, more than 4 in 10 adults who experienced violence from their partner had a child in their care at the time. This is a reduction from 50.9 per cent in 2012.
Bullying (p. 10)	In 2017, 15.3 per cent of those aged 15-19, were very or extremely concerned about bullying. Almost one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were very or extremely concerned about bullying.
Out of home care (p. 11)	The number of children in out-of-home-care (OOHC) has been on an upward trajectory, with 8.6 children per thousand in OOHC in 2016, up from 7.3 in 2011 and 6.2 in 2008. When viewed separately, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are almost 10 times more likely to be in OOHC.
Detention of children and youth (p. 11)	The proportion of children aged 10-17 years in detention has been trending downwards, sitting at 0.3 per 1,000 in 2015-16. At the same time, the proportion of youth in prison aged 18-24 years has been increasing, reaching 2.7 per 1,000 in 2016. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 25 times more likely to be in detention than non-Indigenous children, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are about 15 times more likely to be in prison than non-Indigenous youth.

## Material Basics

Measure and report page number	Findings
Poverty (p. 16)	In 2014, 17.4 per cent of children aged up to 14 were living in households earning less than half national median household earnings, up from 17.3 in 2010. In 2014-15, 31.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged up to 14 lived in households that ran out of money for basic living expenses in the previous 12 months.
Jobless families (p. 16)	The percentage of children up to 14 living in homes where no one has a job has fallen from 15 per cent in 2010 to 12.8 per cent in 2016. Australia's OECD ranking on this measure has remained in the bottom third, slipping from 22 of 27 nations in 2008 to 29 of 32 in 2014.
Youth unemployment (p. 19)	Long-term youth unemployment shows a disturbing upward trend from 0.6 per cent in 2006 to 5.9 per cent in 2014.

## Learning

Measure and report page number	Findings
Early childhood education (p. 34)	Australia trails the OECD in pre-school attendance, ranked 35 of 40 nations in 2014. The percentage of 4-5 years olds who usually attend preschool has fallen from 85 per cent in 2011 to 83.3 per cent in 2014.
Performance in Reading, Maths & Science (p. 34)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to suffer educational disadvantage from year 4 onwards as evidenced in every reading, writing and science performance indicator under TIMMS, PIRLS and PISA.
Year 12 retention (p. 36)	Between 2011 and 2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 retention rates improved faster than the average, increasing by 28 per cent (from 48.7 per cent to 62.4 per cent). Generally, Year 12 retention rates improved by 7 per cent over the same period (from 79.3 per cent to 84.8 per cent).
School pressure (p. 38)	In 2014, 55 per cent of year 8 girls and 47.1 per cent of boys reported feeling some, or a lot of pressure from schoolwork. Australia ranked 24 of 26 nations in this indicator.

## Healthy

Measure and report page number	Findings
Underweight at birth and infant mortality (p. 24)	In 2015, 6.5 per cent of babies were underweight at birth, with an infant mortality rate 3.1 per 1,000 live births in 2016. On both measures the rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was about double with 11.9 per cent of children born underweight and an infant mortality rate of 6.2 per 1,000.
Immunisation (p. 24)	The proportion of children aged 2 who are fully immunised has fallen from 92.7 per cent in 2008 to 90.5 per cent in December 2017. In 2015, Australia ranked near the bottom in the OECD for measles immunisation (33 of 35) and 31 of 35 for whooping cough vaccination.
Obesity (p. 26)	Obesity continues to increase with 31.6 per cent of those aged 5-24 being obese in 2015, up from 29.6 per cent in 2007. Rates of obesity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are higher at 40.1 per cent in 2012-13 for the same age group.
Dental Health (p. 26)	Almost 60 per cent of children aged 5-10 years are free of tooth decay (58.3% in 2014-15). However, the inverse is true for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (39.4% were free of decay in 2014-15)
Mental illness (p. 28)	In 2014-15, 15.4 per cent of Australians aged 18-24 years suffered high or very high psychological distress up from 11.8 per cent in 2011.
Suicide (p. 28)	Suicide rates continue to increase amongst youth aged 15-24, rising from 10.3 (per 100,000 population) in 2007 to 12.7 in 2016. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were more than three times more likely to take their own lives at a rate of 39.2 (per 100,000 population) in 2016, up from 33.0 in 2007.
Substance abuse (p. 30)	Overall the rates of substance abuse and smoking are falling amongst young Australians aged 12-24.
Youth violence	Rates of youth violence have declined since 2009.

## Participating

Measure and report page number	Findings
Voting enrolment (p. 42)	Australia is a world leader in young people voting, with 85.4 per cent of those aged 18-24 years enrolled as at June 2017. (note this figure was recorded before the rolls closed on 24 August for the Same Sex Marriage postal survey).
Community participation (p. 44)	In 2014, only 5.4 per cent of Australians aged 18-24 reported participating in civic and political groups in the past year, down from 11.1 per cent in 2006.

## Positive sense of Culture and identity

Measure and report page number	Findings
Discrimination (p. 48)	In 2017, 11.1 per cent of Australians aged 15-19 reported that discrimination is a personal concern, an increase from 10.8 per cent in 2013. This figure was 19.8 per cent amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
Gender and sexuality (p. 48)	In 2014, 72.3 per cent of those aged 16 to 27 who identify as LGBTQI said they had experienced abuse because of their sexuality and/or gender identity.
Country of birth (p. 50)	In 2016, a fifth (21.1 per cent) of young Australians were born overseas. This is an increase from 12.2 per cent in 2006.
Body image (p. 50)	In 2017, 31.1 per cent of young people aged 15-19 reported body image as a personal concern. Amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people this figure was 30.7 per cent.

**The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)**

[www.aracy.org.au](http://www.aracy.org.au)

Phone: (02) 6248 2400

Email: [enquires@aracy.org.au](mailto:enquires@aracy.org.au)